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to another. Many have been waiting in propagating a story, that the source from which they spoke. Some have attributed it to one cause, some taxes, which are the reports that have been circulated with regard to the On the whole-for turn which the politics of the City of Philadelphia have

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a light very different from that in which their false prejudices have disposed them for some time past to view it.

But before I proceed to enter upon a subject of such importance, both to you as a Society, and myself as one of the representatives thereof, I persuade myself you will do me the justice to grant me one request, without which, indeed, it will be in vain to attempt to offer any thing, however just or reasonable, in the way of defence, *viz.* That you would endeavour to divest yourselves entirely of every degree of prejudice, that you may have, from misrepresentation, conceived against me, and allow your minds to lye open to the dictates of that conviction, which, I flatter myself, will arise from an attentive weighing, in the balance of candour and impartiality, the simple facts which I shall now lay before you. Confident that a request so reasonable will be readily granted, I must next call your attention to the minute of the Incorporation, of the 11th of September last, which you will find recorded in the following words, and to which I beg your particular attention.

“ On the wished-for turn which the politics of the City of Edinburgh have taken, various are the reports that have been circulated with regard to the source from which they arose. Some have attributed it to one cause, some to another. Many have not been wanting in propagating a story, that the principal motive for attempting the proposed alteration in the Council of Edinburgh, has been actuated by a desire of *lessening the influence* in Parliament of *OUR PRESENT WORTHY REPRESENTATIVE*. As, however, the part which the United Incorporations of *MARY'S CHAPEL* have already taken in the matter, has been influenced by *no such motives*, they think themselves called upon, to declare their APPROBATION of *SIR LAURENCE DUNDAS*; and that though they are resolved to support their Chief Magistrate in his public-spirited plan of *independency*, they are equally resolved, that the *INTEREST OF SIR LAURENCE DUNDAS* in the City of *Edinburgh*, shall not, in the *smallest degree*, be impaired, but, on the contrary, better established.”

Now, Gentlemen, from this minute you will allow, that, on the Wednesday immediately preceding the election, it was your declared sentiments, That, in supporting the Chief Magistrate in his plan of independency, you were equally determined, that the interest of our present Representative in Parliament, should not in the *smallest degree* be thereby impaired. Was not this your resolution, Gentlemen? Did you not avow it in a manner the most public, by ordering it to be inserted in the *Edinburgh News-papers* published that evening? Nay, is it not fairly deducible from that minute, that you considered the pre-

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serving entire the Parliamentary interest of your present Representative, as an object, not only of considerable importance, but as preferable to any other political consideration then in view?—For that of the taking away the shortening of the leets, was not, by your Chief Magistrate, then so much as publicly hinted at: And you will be the more confirmed in this opinion, when it is further observed, that if he had been really *in earnest* as to that matter, he had the fairest opportunity he could possibly have wished for, in the month of July 1776, of applying, by a majority, even of the *Merchant Council*, which he then had, to the Convention of the Royal Boroughs then met, whose joint influence, in an application to Parliament, could not have failed to procure, before this time, the redress of a grievance, so long, and so justly complained of.—This opportunity, however, it is well known, he neglected.

Now, Gentlemen, from the above minute or resolution, you must certainly allow, that, whilst it stood *unrescinded*, and in its original force, I was bound to consent to no measure that might tend, in the smallest degree, to impair that Parliamentary interest. Did you not meet expressly for the purpose of making this declaration in favour of your present Representative?—It is undeniable. To say that you *meant not* what you then expressed in your minute, would be offering an indignity to your candour; it would be accusing you of a dissimulation of conduct, which you *profess* to abhor. You will here, however, very naturally ask me, How I came to know that Mr Stodart was acting in opposition to the Parliamentary interest you so publicly declared you were to support? The dawning of this discovery appeared, in part, from a conversation that I had with himself; and, till then, I solemnly declare, I never doubted the *sincerity* of his *professions of attachment* to the interest of Sir Laurence Dundas. But this discovery opened more fully upon Monday the 16th September, in consequence of a message which I received from a certain Lawyer, now a Judge,—from a knowledge of whose political sentiments regarding the City-contest, I refused to go to him. However, not long after, a second, nay a third message came to me from the same Gentleman, (but by a different person), pressing me, in the strongest terms, to espouse that interest; and my friend, after using every argument that political zeal could possibly suggest, added, “That, by complying with his request, and acting in conjunction with the Lord Provost, and my colleague Deacon Brodie, I would effectually promote my own private interest.” My answer was, That I was engaged, both by the resolution of the Incorporation, and my own inclination, to support the interest of Sir Laurence Dundas, and that I had always considered these two Gentlemen as *friends* to the same interest: But if they had,

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notwithstanding

notwithstanding of their *professions*, adopted another—an *opposite* interest, I was sorry for it, as I could, in that case, no longer follow them, nor their measures; and therefore begged of my friend, to urge me no further on the subject. Upon this he left me, and went to the cross, where that Gentleman and others were waiting for his return, and delivered my answer. However, as if this my answer had not been sufficient, I received, in the evening of the same day, intimation from another friend, That, “in consequence of my “obstinacy in the forenoon, methods of a very disagreeable nature were in “agitation, by which I would be prevented from voting, or from serving “either party.” Upon this friendly, although disagreeable information, and finding matters taking this very unexpected turn, I thought it was high time for me to look to my own safety: Previous to which, however, I wrote a letter to Deacon Brodie; and what cruel steps were taken after that period, many of you are not unacquainted with. Here, indeed, I might, with propriety, take notice of the active part that some (even members of the Incorporation) took in heightening my distress after commitment, by a conduct the most *inhumane* and *unchristian*: But, in return, I shall only say, that if they have outstrip’d me in acts of defamation and injurious treatment, I shall endeavour to counterbalance, nay, if possible, exceed them, by acts of beneficence, flowing from a sincere and hearty forgiveness.

To nourish and support a spirit of disaffection in the Incorporation towards me, some have been successful enough to persuade many, that I was one of those who voted to deprive Mr Brodie of a gown. This falsehood is so glaring, that it is almost needless to give it an answer, were it not that many of you who have never been in Council, or given much attention to the sett of the Borough, may be apt to be imposed upon by it; which indeed would be no great matter of surprise, when Deacon Bonnar, who has already sat two years in Council, could so far *forget* himself, as to assert, in your hearing, that I had given my vote against Deacon Brodie’s having a gown. I had no vote in the matter; for it is well known, that the new elected Deacons have no voice in Council, until the first meeting after the *Ordinary* Council Deacons are chosen.

Similar to this falsehood, is another report that has been industriously propagated, *viz.* “That I engaged to vote Deacon Brodie *Conveener*, and to accompany Mr Stodart in every step of his plan (a plan of which, by the bye, I was totally ignorant) without making Sir Laurence Dundas’s interest a condition.” Allowing this report to be true, (which I deny), and to have its full force, it must be observed, that the declaration of the Incorporation was
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prior to every engagement that I could possibly come under to any man ; and unless the Incorporation had *rescinded* that declaration, I was most undoubtedly bound to look upon it as *their* sentiments, consequently to be the *sole* directory of my political conduct upon that occasion. But, independent of your declaration, you all (at least most of you) knew well my attachment to the interest of Sir Laurence Dundas : How then could it be expected, that I should join with any man to overturn that interest, when these my own sentiments were further confirmed, by your declaring, in so public a manner, your resolution to support the same interest.

Various have been the causes assigned for my attachment to that interest, all of which, but *two*, I solemnly aver to be false : The *one* arises purely from a principle of gratitude, being one of *seven* of this Incorporation who have shared of his employment : The *other* reason of my attachment, flows from a full conviction of his being a Member, not only worthy of our choice, but more for the benefit of the City, than the interest which has appeared in competition with him. And in this I am the more confirmed, when I again review your sentiments as expressed in the minute formerly quoted, wherein you declare your *approbation* of him, and determination to support his interest, as well as from the consideration, that the Community in general have once and again reposed so high a trust in him, as that of Representative in Parliament for the metropolis of Scotland : And as that trust is the greatest which you have, as a political body, to repose in any man, it of consequence follows, that every inferior *private* view of *interest* and *ambition* of individuals, when put in competition with it, ought most undoubtedly to give way. Here I cannot help noticing, that motives of action have been ascribed to me, which my soul abhors, and which, unless a total change had taken place in my natural disposition, could never have had the smallest influence upon me. Had *money*, had any self-interested advantage been my motive or principle of action on that occasion, as has been most daringly asserted, it was much more in my power to have served myself in that way, by adopting a different line of conduct from that which I followed : For I can assure you, Gentlemen, I was offered by one, who declared he had dined the day before with a certain Judge, a considerable sum, provided I would relinquish my attachment to the interest of Sir Laurence Dundas, and fall in with an opposite plan of politics ; adding, that “ he had “ authority to assure me, that although they had been rather too *close-fisted* “ hitherto, Sir Laurence would find that they would be *too heavy metal* for him.” This intelligence may perhaps astonish some, (and no wonder it should), but it is a circumstance not more surprising than true—a trial of political virtue, which

which, perhaps, few in my *then* circumstances, would have had the resolution to withstand.

On the other hand, I can freely declare, that neither Sir Laurence, nor any person for him, ever doubted the sincerity of my attachment, so far as to attempt to confirm me in his interest by any such *base* and *unworthy* means.

Here, perhaps, some may be apt to say with a sneer, That, "to be sure, the office of his Majesty's Glazier for Scotland, is neither *base* nor *unworthy* the acceptance of a Deacon;" and insinuate, that this has been no doubt an express stipulation on my part, previous to last election. But, in answer to all such insidious slanders, I need only say, what I can easily prove if necessary, That it is several years since I had a positive assurance of obtaining this appointment, not from Sir Laurence, but from another Gentleman, to whom I am under the highest obligations: And therefore, if after my unmerited and unexampled sufferings posterior to last election, Sir Laurence added his influence to that of my Honourable friend, gratitude forbids me to consider it as any deduction from the good offices of him who was the first mover.

And now, Gentlemen, may I not reasonably presume, that after you have perused the above representation, nothing further need be offered in my defence? From the result, however, of my small acquaintance with mankind, I am convinced, that no task is so difficult, as that of removing popular prejudices; nay, such I observe to be their infatuating power, that oft-times the strongest arguments, drawn from the most obvious facts, prove insufficient to remove them. A mind thus determined against conviction, is perhaps in its last stage of depravity; for, when once a man is hardened to such a degree of insensibility, it is impossible to say how far the violence of his unruly passions may lead him.

How far these observations have been verified in my case, I leave the candid to judge. For my own part, Gentlemen, I cannot omit this opportunity, of returning my sincerest thanks to such of you as have acted a different part. Your expressions of friendship, I hope, I shall, as long as I live, bear a grateful remembrance of; and be assured, I shall with pleasure embrace every opportunity to testify the sincerity of my gratitude. As for such of my Brethren as have acted an opposite part, I need only say, that I shall endeavour, as much as possible, both to forget and forgive their conduct: I should be sorry if either they or theirs should ever feel half of that distress of body and mind, which, chiefly through their means, I have unjustly suffered. Even at this distant period, can I forget what a torrent of undeserved abuse has been poured upon me? What a load of unmerited reproach have I sustained! Has not

not invention itself been exhausted, in ushering into the Public, the most false and groundless reports concerning me? Has not every nerve been strained (although, thank God, in vain,) to blast, if possible, my every future hope and prospect in life? Nay, has not even my very life itself been threatened by assassination to be cut off?—This may appear astonishing to some, but it is not the less true.

But I forbear, Gentlemen, to trouble you with a repetition of my sufferings; my defence is simple and clear. My general plan of conduct, ever since I had the honour of appearing in Council as your representative, has evidenced, that I always regarded measures more than men, and preferred the public good in general, and your consistency as a Corporation in particular, to the private ends of party. But while these did not interfere, I always considered private gratitude as an indispensable obligation. If gratitude, then, Gentlemen, be a crime in your view, I confess I have been *criminal*.—If acting up to the spirit of your resolution be a fault, I am doubtless *highly culpable*.

But if you wish to preserve a character of consistency in the eye of the Public:—If you wish your members not to be accused of ingratitude to their benefactors, I presume you will not censure my political conduct. Ever since the dawning of an attempt to establish the freedom and independency of the Trades upon a permanent foundation, I challenge you to produce one who has been more zealous to promote the patriotic plan, than I have been, so far as I had influence or opportunity. But I never could bring myself to consider a cause of so much importance, to be inseparably connected with the honour or advancement of any individual.

Allow me to say, Gentlemen, it demeans the cause to view it in such a light. If my colleague had been a man, whose uncommon talents had rendered his appearance at the head of the Trades indispensibly necessary for the success of your cause, I should have considered the obloquy, that has been thrown out against me for declining to vote him Conveener, as just: But as this can hardly be alledged, even by his warmest friends, I cannot imagine why my conduct, in that particular, should be so severely censured. Believe me, Gentlemen, the personal reflections thrown out against me on that account, by some of that Gentleman's *over-zealous* friends, have hurt the cause they meant to serve, in the eye of the unprejudiced part of the Public, much more than any *political misconduct* of mine. Nothing hurts a public cause more, than an appearance of too much private personal attachment. I sincerely wish, therefore, that in a cause of so much importance as that which we all have in view, such measures could always be adopted, as from their decency and propriety would be most conducive to accomplish so desirable an end.

Confident

Confident that the propriety of such a conduct must appear evident, I leave your candour to determine, from the facts above set forth, how far I have acted in the unjustifiable manner that has been represented. They are facts, and, as such, ought, and, I doubt not, will have their due weight with all of you; and, I am fully persuaded, will dispose you to adopt, with respect to me, sentiments very different from those, which some *designing* men have been assiduous enough to make you entertain; and that, instead of giving way to that spirit of malevolence, inhumanity, and misrepresentation, that so conspicuously characterizes some of your Fellow Citizens, you will cherish the more amiable virtues, and social dispositions of benevolence, humanity, and candour. By the exercise of these virtues, you will more effectually recommend the cause we are now engaged in, than by an opposite line of conduct,—and more certainly secure to yourselves and posterity, that extent of liberty which will be most conducive to the public good, and that degree of freedom which will constitute you happy, both as a society, and as individuals.

I am,

GENTLEMEN,

Very respectfully,

Your most humble Servant,

EDINBURGH, }
Sept. 6. 1777. }



THO^s. SOMMERS.